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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Connie Carmichael et al. :
Application No. 09/638,304 : **DECISION ON PETITION**
Filed: August 14, 2000 :
Attorney Docket No.: SD-CARMI-SCH051006- :
1SXG :

This is a decision on the petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), filed August 10, 2006, to revive the above-identified application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within TWO (2) MONTHS from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)" or "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)." This is not a final agency decision.

The application became abandoned on April 29, 2004, for failure to file a timely reply to the non-Final Office Action mailed January 28, 2004. Accordingly, a Notice of Abandonment was mailed August 10, 2004.

The present petition was filed with an authorization to charge the petition fee and asserts that the response was not timely filed because the Attorneys of record at the time, Lyon & Lyon disbanded and petitioner was unable to locate to the files and thus never learned of the outstanding office action until May 2005 when they secured the services of Fish and Richardson PC.

A grantable petition to revive an abandoned application under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

- (1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof;
- (2) the petition fee as set forth in § 1.17(l);

- (3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to this paragraph was unavoidable; and
- (4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in § 1.20(d)) required pursuant to paragraph (c) of this section.

This petition lacks items (3) above.

SHOWING OF UNAVOIDABLE DELAY

Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of “unavoidable” delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word ‘unavoidable’ . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.¹

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 37 CFR 1.137(a). Specifically, an application is “unavoidably” abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action, but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, telefacsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.²

Petitioner should note that there are three periods to be considered during the evaluation of a petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.137(a) or (b). The delay in:

- (1) reply that originally resulted in abandonment and from the abandonment

¹In *re Mattullath*, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912)(quoting *Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm’r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also *Winkler v. Ladd*, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), *aff’d*, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); *Ex parte Henrich*, 1913 Dec. Comm’r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a “case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account.” *Smith v. Mossinghoff*, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was “unavoidable.” *Haines v. Quigg*, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

²*Ex parte Pratt*, 1887 Dec. Comm’r Pat. 31 (Comm’r Pat. 1887).

until discovery thereof;

- (2) filing an initial petition pursuant to §1.137(a) or (b) to revive the application; and
- (3) filing a *grantable* petition pursuant to §1.137(a) or (b) to revive the application.³

Petitioners have not provided any documentary evidence to substantiate their argument that the delay in responding to the non-Final Office mailed January 28, 2004 was unavoidable. The showing of record therefore is that the delay in responding to the non-Final Office Action, in view of the disbanding of the firm with the power of attorney, was due to petitioners not contacting the USPTO to provide either an address change or a revocation and new power of attorney in 2002 when they learned of the disbanding of Lyon & Lyon, due to petitioners not gaining access to the files held by Lyon & Lyon until 2005 and after securing the services of Fish and Richardson in 2005, petitioners did not respond to the office action until at least one year later.

The failure to timely respond to the non-Final Office Action when due is not therefore based on a circumstance that could've been avoided had the petitioner been more diligent.

Petitioner has therefore not established that the delay was unavoidable. Rather than unavoidable delay, the record indicates a lack of diligence on the part of petitioner, dating back to 2002. In order to establish unavoidable delay, petitioner must demonstrate diligence in prosecution of the matter,⁴ and the record does not establish that petitioner took all action necessary for prosecution of this application in satisfaction of 37 CFR 1.137(a). As petitioner has presented no showing of unavoidable delay, the petition will be dismissed.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)⁵,

³ See: Changes to Patent Practice and Procedure; Final Rule Notice, 62 Fed. Reg. 53131 at 53158 (10 October, 1997).

⁴ See Douglas v. Manbeck, 21 USPQ2d 1697, 1700 (E.D. Pa. 1991), aff'd 975 F.2d 869, 24 USPQ2d 1318 (Fed. Cir. 1992).

⁵ Effective December 1, 1997, the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) now provide that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition filed under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of

which now provides that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b).

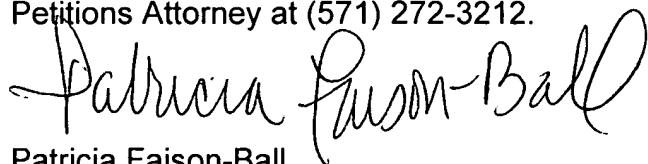
The filing of a petition under the unintentional standard cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore should be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b). A petition under 37 CFR 1.137 (b) also carries with it a petition fee of \$750.00 for a small entity and \$1500.00 for a large entity and the \$250.00 petition fee paid with the instant petition cannot be credited towards the fee for the petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), if petitioner chooses to file such.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop Petitions
 Commissioner for Patents
 P.O. Box 1450
 Alexandria VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (571) 273-8300
 Attn: Office of Petitions

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned Petitions Attorney at (571) 272-3212.



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the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).